

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 1-14 and 16, without prejudice or disclaimer.

Please add the following new claims:

7-11-24 17¹⁸. (New) A variant vascular endothelial cell growth factor (VEGF) polypeptide which is capable of binding to a VEGF receptor without significantly inducing a VEGF response, said variant polypeptide comprising an amino acid modification of at least one cysteine residue in VEGF, wherein said amino acid modification inhibits disulfide bond formation.

18¹⁹. (New) The variant VEGF polypeptide according to claim 17¹⁸ wherein said amino acid modification is a substitution of said at least one cysteine residue with a different amino acid which is incapable of participating in the formation of a disulfide bond.

61 19²⁰. (New) The variant VEGF polypeptide according to claim 18¹⁹ wherein said cysteine is at amino acid position 51 and/or 60.

20²¹. (New) The variant VEGF polypeptide according to claim 19²⁰ wherein said VEGF polypeptide is capable of inhibiting induction of a VEGF response.

21²². (New) The variant VEGF polypeptide according to claim 20²¹ wherein said variant VEGF response is mitogenic activity.

22²³. (New) The variant VEGF polypeptide according to claim 21²² wherein two cysteines are substituted with a different amino acid at amino acid positions 51 and 60.

²³~~23~~. (New) The variant VEGF polypeptide according to claim ¹⁹~~18~~ wherein said cysteine is at amino acid position 51.

²⁴~~24~~. (New) The variant VEGF polypeptide according to claim ¹⁹~~18~~ wherein said cysteine is at amino acid position 60.

²⁵~~25~~. (New) The variant VEGF polypeptide according to claim ¹⁹~~18~~ wherein aspartic acid is substituted for cysteine.

²⁶~~26~~. (New) The variant VEGF polypeptide according to claim ²⁴~~23~~ comprising the substitution C51D.

²⁷~~27~~. (New) The variant VEGF polypeptide according to claim ²⁵~~24~~ comprising the substitution C60D.

²⁸~~28~~. (New) The variant VEGF polypeptide according to claim ¹⁸~~17~~ wherein said amino acid modification is a chemical modification of said at least one cysteine residue which renders said cysteine residue incapable of participating in the formation of a disulfide bond.

²⁹~~29~~. (New) The variant VEGF polypeptide according to claim ²⁹~~28~~ wherein said chemical modification is of a cysteine residue at amino acid position 51 and/or 60 of the native VEGF amino acid sequence.

³¹
30. (New) An isolated nucleic acid sequence comprising a sequence that encodes the variant VEGF polypeptide of claim ¹⁸17.

³²
31. (New) A replicable expression vector capable in a transformant host cell of expressing the nucleic acid of claim ³¹30.

³³
32. (New) Host cells transformed with the vector according to claim ³²31.

³⁴
33. (New) Host cells according to claim ³³32 which are Chinese hamster ovary cells.

³⁵
34. (New) A composition of matter comprising the variant VEGF polypeptide according to claim ¹⁸17 in combination with a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.
